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Policy directives to the drug programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and strengthening the drug programme and the role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as its governing body, including administrative, budgetary and strategic management questions

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
Twenty-fourth session
Vienna, 12-16 May 2015
Item 3 (a) of the provisional agenda**
Strategic management, budgetary and administrative questions: work of the working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Work of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Note by the Secretariat

Summary

The present note has been prepared pursuant to Economic and Social Council decision 2013/246, in which the Council renewed the mandate of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime until the first half of 2015, as well as Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolutions 52/13, 54/10, 54/17 and 56/11 and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolutions 18/3, 20/1, 20/9 and 22/2. The present note covers the work of the working group between 20 November 2014 and 12 January 2015. Information on the work of the working group during the period 12 February to 1 October 2014 can be found in document E/CN.7/2014/8/Add.1-E/CN.15/2014/8/Add.1.

* E/CN.7/2015/1.
** E/CN.15/2015/1.

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I. Deliberations

1. From 20 November 2014 to 12 January 2015, the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime held one formal meeting and two informal meetings. It continued to consider issues under the items of the agenda approved by the Economic and Social Council in its decision 2013/246 and by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in its resolution 52/13 and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in its resolution 18/3 and in accordance with the terms of reference annexed to those resolutions, as well as with provisions contained in Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolutions 54/10, 54/17 and 56/11 and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolutions 20/1, 20/9 and 22/2.

2. At the meeting of the working group held on 20 November, the Secretariat presented the report of the Executive Director on the implementation of the consolidated budget for the biennium 2014-2015 for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) (E/CN.7/2014/18-E/CN.15/2014/21), including the draft resolutions to be introduced at the reconvened sessions of the two Commissions in December 2014, and provided information on the implementation in 2014 of full cost recovery for the period 2014-2015. The working group was informed of the uses of project support costs and general-purpose funds. Reference was also made to cost-saving measures implemented by the Office in 2014. Some delegations expressed their support for the full cost recovery model, noting that it would contribute to the cost efficiency, sustainability, transparency and strategic direction of the Office. Attention was also drawn to the low level of general-purpose funds and to the importance of timely and full implementation of full cost recovery. Several speakers mentioned that the current strategic framework of the Office needed further improvements to create better links between regional and thematic programmes, clearer prioritization and transparency. Some speakers stressed the importance of transparent and results-based and mandate-based management. Reference was made to the future development by UNODC of an annual report and annual appeal for funds, retroactive application of full cost recovery, implementation of Umoja and the functioning of the committee monitoring implementation of full cost recovery, established within the Office. The working group was also briefed about the UNODC regional programme for South-Eastern Europe, including countering illicit trafficking and organized crime, enhancement of integrity and justice, and drug abuse prevention and treatment. The Secretariat elaborated on the management of human resources at UNODC, covering aspects such as the composition of staff at UNODC headquarters and in field offices, the Organization's policies governing geographical representation and the gender balance of UNODC staff and the current status in those respects, and the work/life policy of the United Nations. The meeting was informed that the overall goal of 50/50 gender representation was still to be met and that the Executive Director of UNODC continued to focus on promoting an equitable gender balance among UNODC staff at all levels. With regard to the system of desirable ranges for the geographical representation, the meeting was briefed on the policy established by the General Assembly, which is applicable only to regular budget posts. In that regard, attention was drawn to the specificity of UNODC, in which 80 per cent of all posts are funded from extrabudgetary resources. Several delegations expressed

concern over geographical representation in UNODC, particularly in senior positions. With regard to gender balance, delegations expressed concern about the low representation of women at senior levels. A follow-up informal briefing by the Secretariat on the draft resolutions on the consolidated budget for the biennium 2014-2015 for UNODC was held on 27 November.

3. At the meeting held on 2 December, UNODC introduced the new thematic programme on health and livelihoods, including interventions for the prevention of substance use, treatment and rehabilitation for people who use drugs, and HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment and care, including in cooperation with other United Nations entities such as the World Health Organization and the Joint and Co-sponsored United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS). It was highlighted that the alternative development component of the thematic programme was a fundamental pillar of international drug control, as it addressed the cultivation of illicit crops and the social, economic and health challenges that global drug trafficking created for communities. The component on wildlife and forest crime was also presented. Speakers expressed appreciation for the work of UNODC on prevention and treatment of drug use and drug use disorders and rehabilitation, including in relation to HIV/AIDS, and noted that that work was in line with the international drug control conventions and the mandates given to the Office. Some delegations emphasized the importance of alternative development as one of the successful counter-narcotic measures within a larger strategy for economic development. The regional programme for promoting counter-narcotic efforts in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries (for the period 2011-2014) was also presented at the meeting, highlighting activities and achievements with regard to law enforcement cooperation, cooperation in legal matters, prevention and treatment of drug dependence among vulnerable groups and trends and impact analysis. Speakers highlighted the challenges posed to the rural communities by the increase in opium cultivation in Afghanistan and noted that alternative development should not be implemented in isolation, especially in post-conflict situations. The findings and recommendations of the independent midterm evaluation of the Afghan Opiate Trade Project were presented at the meeting. The evaluation concluded that the Project had made contributions relevant to planning counter-narcotics interventions. The working group was provided with a management response corresponding to each recommendation. The working group concluded its consideration of the draft resolutions contained in the above-mentioned report of the Executive Director on the implementation of the consolidated budget for the biennium 2014-2015 for UNODC, incorporating all the comments made by delegations. A draft statement by the co-chairs of the working group, which could serve as a basis for the review of the functioning of the body at the forthcoming reconvened and regular sessions of the Commissions, was endorsed. The working group agreed that the statement be reflected in the respective reports of the reconvened sessions, to serve as a basis for the review of the functioning of the working group by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fifty-eighth session and by the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its twenty-fourth session.

4. At its formal meeting held on 12 January 2015, the working group agreed on recommendations for consideration by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fifty-eighth session and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its twenty-fourth session covering aspects such as the extension of its mandate, continuous support for strengthening the financial situation of UNODC and

promoting a culture of evaluation and an integrated programme approach within the Office (see annex). In addition, the Executive Director addressed the meeting, focusing on the overall strategic and operational coherence reached by the Office through an integrated, interregional approach and initiatives such as the "networking the networks" initiative to promote closer cooperation between existing law enforcement coordination centres and platforms to counter drug trafficking, in particular opiates from Afghanistan. Reference was also made to an enterprise risk management framework that had been introduced to anticipate and respond to challenges, and to the work of the internal, interdivisional senior-level committee established to monitor progress and challenges arising in the implementation of the full cost recovery model. Progress in the implementation of the UNODC regional programme to promote the rule of law and counter the drug problem and crime in South Asia for the period 2013-2015 was reported on at the meeting, highlighting activities and achievements with regard to countering transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking, human trafficking, smuggling of migrants, wildlife crime and maritime crime, countering corruption, terrorism prevention, drug use prevention, treatment and care and prevention of HIV/AIDS. Speakers noted that illicit drugs were a significant challenge for the countries of the region due to its location between the two of the world's major opium-producing areas. It was noted that abuse of prescription drugs and the diversion of precursors were emerging problems in South Asia. The Independent Evaluation Unit presented an update on its work and the way forward in 2015. Participants were informed that the General Assembly had adopted resolution 69/237 on building capacity for the evaluation of development activities at country level and that a high-level panel discussion on the use of evaluation in evidence-based policymaking would be held in Vienna in April 2015. Finally, the Secretariat introduced an advance copy of the report of the Secretariat, to be submitted to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fifty-eighth session, on the implementation of resolutions and decisions relating to the drug programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime adopted since 2012 in which action by the Office was requested (E/CN.7/2015/10), for the consideration of the working group. A similar report, on the implementation of resolutions and decisions relating to crime prevention and criminal justice adopted since 2012 in which action by the Office was requested, was being prepared for submission to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its twenty-fourth session.

II. Organizational and administrative matters

5. Under the guidance of the co-chairs, Reza Najafi (Islamic Republic of Iran) and Ignacio Baylina Ruiz (Spain), the working group held two informal meetings, on 20 November and on 2 December 2014. A formal meeting was held on 12 January 2015.

6. The statement by the co-chairs of the working group (E/CN.7/2014/CRP.16-E/CN.15/2014/CRP.8), referred to above, was finalized at the meeting held on 2 December 2014 and was made available at the joint meeting of the reconvened fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the reconvened twenty-third session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice held on 4 December 2014. Pursuant to the recommendation made by the respective

extended bureaux, both the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice decided to include the statement in the report on their reconvened session.

7. The Secretariat continued to provide documents and information to the working group by electronic means and in hard copy, including through a web page accessible to the public (www.unodc.org/unodc/en/commissions/FINGOV/FINGOV-index.html) and a secure web page for Member States (www.unodc.org/missions/en/wggf/index.html), set up and maintained by the Secretariat for the use of the working group.

Annex

Recommendations of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

A. Introduction

1. The third mandate of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime will end in the first half of 2015. Pursuant to Economic and Social Council decision 2013/246, at their respective fifty-eighth and twenty-fourth sessions in the first half of 2015, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice are expected to carry out a thorough review of the functioning of the working group and consider the extension of its mandate. In line with past practice and to facilitate consultations by the Commissions, the co-chairs of the working group prepared a statement, which was endorsed by the working group at its 11th meeting, on 2 December 2014, and made available to the joint meeting of the reconvened fifty-seventh session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the reconvened twenty-third session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, and included in their respective reports. The proposals below on the future work of the working group incorporate the statement by the co-chairs.

B. Recommendations of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

2. At its formal meeting of 12 January 2015, the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime made the following recommendations for consideration by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fifty-eighth session and the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at its twenty-fourth session:

Extension of the mandate of the working group

(a) To reaffirm the efficiency of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in supporting the improvement of the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), by extending the working group's mandate so that it can continue its function as the forum for dialogue among Member States and between Member States and the Secretariat on the development and implementation of the thematic and regional programmes of UNODC and continue to discuss on a regular basis financial, governance and evaluation and oversight matters relating to UNODC;

(b) To reaffirm the role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the principal policymaking organ of the United Nations on matters of international drug control and as the governing body of the drug programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the role of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice as the governing body of the United Nations on matters of crime prevention and criminal justice and as the governing body of the crime programme of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime;

(c) To express once again their continued concern about the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and express their awareness of the continued need to address these issues in a pragmatic, result-oriented, efficient and cooperative manner;

(d) To reaffirm Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 52/13 and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolution 18/3, as well as Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolutions 54/10, 54/17 and 56/11 and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolutions 20/1, 20/9 and 22/2;

(e) To decide to renew the mandate of the standing open-ended intergovernmental working group on improving the governance and financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime until the part of the session of the Commissions to be held in the first half of 2017, at which time the Commissions should carry out a thorough review of the functioning of the working group and consider the extension of its mandate;

Continuous support for strengthening the financial situation of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

(f) To recall that the working group has on several occasions discussed fundraising issues and ways to achieve a sustainable balance between core and non-core funding for UNODC to ensure delivery capacity and the sustainability of thematic, global and regional programmes;

(g) To recall also that the working group has been considering the implementation of Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 56/17 and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice resolution 22/9 and has been briefed on the transition to the new full cost recovery funding model;

(h) To request the working group to continue examining and discussing the funding situation and financial management of UNODC, inter alia, by:

(i) Receiving reports on, and facilitating, the resource mobilization process to promote UNODC integrated programmes,[a] stressing their resource requirements, and to enhance funding predictability in line with the medium-term strategy;

(ii) Continuing to discuss with UNODC the efforts to further encourage donors to provide general-purpose funding, including by means of further increasing transparency and improving the application of full cost recovery, as well as the quality of reporting and communication, and to continue to discuss the reasons for the low level of general-purpose funding with a view to

[a] The UNODC definition of the "integrated programming approach" also includes country programmes approved by the programme review committee.

restoring an adequate balance between general-purpose funds and special-purpose funds;

(iii) Continuing to consider further the feasibility, progress and impact of the implementation of full cost recovery and the flexible application of programme support costs, with a view to increasing the effectiveness and results of the technical assistance programmes of the Office;

Continuous support for promoting an integrated programme approach

(i) To recall that the working group has been following the progress by UNODC in implementing an integrated programming approach that seeks to strengthen the links between normative mandates and operational technical assistance and in improving linkages between policy, strategic planning, evaluation, programmatic work, mobilization of resources and partnerships with all relevant stakeholders;

(j) To request the working group:

(i) To continue promoting regular dialogue among all Member States as well as with UNODC on the planning and formulation of the operational activities of UNODC, especially with regard to its thematic, global and regional programmes, in line with the medium term strategy and strategic framework;

(ii) To continue receiving information from UNODC on progress made in the implementation of regional, global and thematic programmes, as well as on progress made with regard to integrating lessons learned and recommendations from evaluations within and across regions, ensuring complementarities among programmes and their alignment with the strategic framework for the period 2014-2015 and the strategy of UNODC for the period 2012-2015;

(iii) To continue discussing with UNODC implementation of results-based management and budgeting;

Continuous support for promoting a culture of evaluation within the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime at all stages of programme planning, development and implementation

(k) To recall that the working group has been provided with numerous presentations on evaluation findings, on which occasions participants have reiterated the importance of having a sustainable, effective and operationally independent corporate evaluation function at UNODC, focused on the implementation, performance and impact of integrated programmes and the consistency with mandates of the Office;

(l) To request the working group to invite the Independent Evaluation Unit:

(i) To continue providing the working group with the findings of the evaluations of UNODC programmes;

(ii) To continue promoting a culture of evaluation throughout UNODC at all stages of programme planning, development and implementation;

(iii) To continue to work with UNODC in monitoring the implementation of recommendations made by relevant oversight bodies;

(iv) To continue to work with UNODC on building increased coordination between evaluation, audit and other oversight bodies with the aim of building a coordinated continuum of oversight of UNODC projects and programmes;

Continuous support for strengthening human resources governance to improve gender balance and geographical representation

(m) To recall that the working group has been discussing the question of geographical representation and gender balance in the composition of the UNODC staff as part of its efforts to improve the governance of the Office;

(n) To request the working group:

(i) To continue to address the issue of gender and geographical representation and its evolution under a specific agenda item, in order to discuss possible measures for improvement in this area;

(ii) To continue receiving updated and comprehensive information, including in a disaggregated way, on the composition of the staff and the recruitment policies of UNODC;

Reviewing the format and organization of work of the working group

(o) To decide that the working group shall hold formal and informal meetings in line with current practice, and that the dates of those meetings shall be determined by the co-chairs of the working group in consultation with the Secretariat;

(p) To reiterate the importance of developing an indicative annual working plan by Member States, also taking into account inputs from the Secretariat, in order to guide the work of the working group;

(q) To request that the relevant documentation be provided to the working group not later than 10 working days before a meeting;

(r) To approve the provisional agenda of the working group as follows:

1. Biennial consolidated budget for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.
2. Governance and financial situation of the Office.
3. Evaluation and oversight.
4. Other matters.